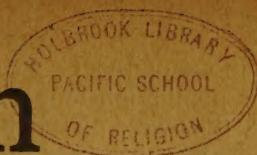


# The Christian News-Letter

Edited by  
J. H. OLDHAM



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DEAR MEMBER,

Particulars have reached us from a reliable source about conditions in Holland. Behind the story of bitter suffering stands out the courage of an undefeated people.

## THE WILL TO FREEDOM IN HOLLAND

The attitude of the Dutch nation towards the invaders is stiffening. The firmness of the common people is remarkable and the nation is more united than ever. There is a strong belief that the Germans will lose the war. This is based on the widespread impression of the demoralisation of the German army and the incapacity of the Germans to rule and organise another people. The myth of the superiority of the "young nations" has been exploded, since it is seen that the Germans are quite unable to use their victory for any constructive purpose. German rule is experienced as a purely negative force without ideas, imagination or moral drive. Never has attachment to the House of Orange been as strong as it is to-day.

The food situation is increasingly difficult, but is better than in Belgium. Much concern is felt about conditions in the coming winter. There is no disposition, however, to question the British blockade since the whole nation is united in a single desire to get rid of the invader.

Large numbers of people are being imprisoned, often without any known reason. Those in the Buchenwald concentration camp are better off than the much larger numbers detained in prisons or improvised prisons in Holland. In the Buchenwald camp there are a number of members of Parliament, lawyers, professors and other members of the educated classes. They have the opportunity of engaging in discussions, meeting for the study of the Bible and holding religious services. In the prisons in Holland the treatment of the prisoners is often barbarous. Everything is taken away from them including even their Bibles. They are left in absolute isolation and in many cases are not allowed into the open air. They are subjected to mediaeval methods of torture. Some break under the nervous strain.

Church services are well attended. There are outspoken protests against the treatment of the Jews, and not only the churches, but the Dutch population generally, are taking the Jews under their protection. A number of pastors have been imprisoned. It is feared that the conflict between the Church and the authorities will grow.

## CONDITIONS IN YUGOSLAVIA

Stephen Graham's News-Letter for May deals with the situation in Yugoslavia. It is stated that the Germans have waged war against the Serbs with a greater ferocity than they have shown against any other nation. There has not been the slightest sign of generosity to a brave foe. Dr. Macheck, the trusted political leader of five million Roman Catholic Croats, was opposed to war. When it came he did not go south with the rest of the cabinet, but went to Zagreb and advised the Croats to be calm and remain loyal to

the decisions of the Croat Peasant Party. When the Germans occupied Zagreb the Catholic population found to their astonishment that in place of the leadership of Dr. Macheck they were placed under the heel of a bloodthirsty assassin and terrorist named Pavelitch, who has been for twelve years the hireling of the Italian and Hungarian Governments. He has long threatened to make Serb blood flow like water, but he has also tortured and murdered Croats when he had them in his power.

From other sources comes the news that Germans, Hungarians and Bulgarians are competing with one another in cold-blooded massacres of the Serbs. The victims of mass executions amount to many thousands and are carried out in almost every town and village. Priests are often among the selected victims. It is reported that the Patriarch Gavril, who played a fearless part at the moment of his country's destiny, has been arrested and brought to Belgrade. His clerical robes were removed and he was confined in his underclothes on the ground floor of a building where passers-by could see him. In Macedonia the Bulgarians have expelled all members of the Serbian clergy, replacing them by Bulgarians.

### CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN

The problem of the relation of Christianity and nationalism, which is one of the major problems that confront the Church in all countries, has become acute not only in Germany but also in Japan. All the Protestant bodies in Japan are supporting a movement for a single Protestant Christian Church and have appointed representatives to serve on a commission for Church Union. The Nippon Sei Kokwai (Anglican) has not taken a final decision and is represented on the Commission by three observers.

An All Japan Christians Conference held in Tokyo last October is reported to have been attended by 20,000 people, and at a prayer meeting in the evening the auditorium was filled with 3000 worshippers. The *International Review of Missions* for April quotes the following declaration made at the Conference on behalf of the Japanese Churches :

" From the time that H.I.M. Emperor Jimmu founded the Empire 2,600 years ago, the Imperial reign, in an unbroken line, has radiated its glory around the world. When we contemplate this glorious history we are deeply moved. On this occasion the Christians of all Japan unite in reverently acclaiming ' His Majesty the Emperor, Banzai ! '

" In the present greatly disturbed condition of the world, no nation can be at ease, not even for a moment. In the West a calamitous war is being waged. In the East the China incident has as yet reached no conclusion.

" In the midst of these calamities our nation has established a new structure and is pushing forward in building a new order in Greater Eastern Asia. We Christians in instant response, casting aside church and denominational differences and through church union and united effort, join in the great task of giving spiritual leadership to the people, in respectfully and loyally assisting the Throne in Government and in rendering service to the nation.

" We hereby on this Anniversary Day make the following declaration :

1. We pledge ourselves to the task of preaching Christ and fulfilling our mission to save souls.
2. We pledge ourselves to the achievement of the union of all denominations.
3. We pledge ourselves to endeavour to raise the level of spiritual living, to lift the standards of morals and to strive for a renewal of the nation's life."

Similar nationalist tendencies are finding expression throughout the Japanese Empire. The Methodist Church in Korea had adopted a plan of reform which includes co-operation in inculcating the principles of the new order in Eastern Asia, the introduction of military training in theological colleges, the separation of the Gospel from Jewish history and from western cultural traditions, the dissemination of the " Imperial Way " by attendance at shrines, teaching and literature, the formation of patriotic societies in churches and support of the army by encouraging enlistment. In Manchuria the regulations of the Religious Organisations Law are being enforced even more strictly than in Japan.

The Orthodox Church in Japan, founded by the Russian Orthodox Mission, has been compelled to adopt a new constitution, under which the Presiding Bishop is appointed by the State and all important appointments in the Church require the approval of the Government. The Metropolitan Sergius, while remaining in Japan as Head of the Russian Mission, has resigned his office as Bishop, and appointed a Japanese in his place. The Japanese Orthodox Church has 45,000 members and among them are a number of prominent people, such as General Baron Sadao Araki, who has several times been Minister of War.

#### " THIS ENGLAND "

I have had a letter from one of our members serving in the Forces containing some interesting comments on the recent Supplement on Nazi Germany. I shall try to give effect to his suggestion of a Supplement on similar lines dealing with the state of things in our own country.

" Yes, I can spare a moment of military time to send you a word of appreciation and thanks for the Supplement on Nazi Germany. What would be interesting would be to have from the same pen an analysis of present-day England, in which the good and the bad in our life would be separated and contrasted. Being an uncouth rustic from the hills and dales of Yorkshire, and having also had the benefit of a historical training, I found the 'suburbia' idea most exhilarating—the rootless suburbia without any of the traditions of the countryside. That paragraph seemed to put the whole religious, social and cultural trouble of the Western world in a nutshell. Suburbia is the chief legacy of the West to the German nation ; Nazism is the German reply. Our chief enemy is suburbia, and I believe we are further from defeating it in our own country than we are from defeating the Nazis. Considering its opportunities this country has so far added little to the history of social development in the last year. The basic reason for this is because public opinion is still uninformed as to the nature of the Nazi challenge. If it were, it would have insisted on a more dynamic internal policy. This ignorance is particularly evident to me in the army, and I believe I am dealing with an average cross-section of public opinion. An understanding of the Nazis would have challenged a reply ; failure to face the problem turns us back on ourselves and on the cynicism which is now sweeping the country. Suburbia will never find its 'roots' if its emotion and not its intellect is pitted against the Nazis. Our Government makes us fight, but it does not try to make us think. If we only fight without thinking we shall have been guilty of a nihilism as evil as that which flourishes today in Europe."

#### RESPONSIBILITY

A letter from one of our members who is in business directs attention to a fundamental factor in the creation of a new order. He points out that there is a great deal of canvassing of large-scale remedies which is really an escape from responsibility. The foundation of democracy is the concrete action of individuals in their own sphere of responsibility.

The writer of the letter gives an illustration from his own experience in business. In the industry in which he was engaged for many years there was intense competition between firms and this resulted not in a good product at a low price, but in a good product only at a high price, i.e. from twice to four times the economic figure. " The most successful firms were those which spent huge sums on high-pressure salesmanship and covered their expenditure by charging accordingly. Attempts were frequently made to invade the market with a good product at a low price, yet little success was achieved against the elaborate and extravagant sales technique of the established firms. Our industry extracted from its customers a surcharge of hundreds per cent and then spent that surplus in employing salesmen of energy and initiative to neutralise each other's work. Thus we contributed our quota to the material for the world conflagration. The point I want to make is

that this failure of our industry to carry out its public service efficiently is directly connected with the personal relationships and standards of conduct of those engaged, from managing directors down to the youngest salesmen. For it is only by deceit in one form or another that consumers can be induced to pay a high price when an equally good product is being offered at a low one. Either the expensive product must be endowed with fictitious merits or unfounded suspicions must be aroused against its rival.

"In such personal matters as these, and not in the political sphere, lies the battle-ground for most people. In every walk of life there is an unwritten code of behaviour. By Christian standards it is often deplorably low, but it exists. To raise it at any point is no easy matter. Various pains and penalties are likely to be visited on anyone who dares make the attempt. A salesman who is inconveniently truthful with his customers can be dismissed. The immediate result may appear to be nil, the hardship immense ; the temptation to compromise in the personal sphere and compensate by activity in the political sphere is almost irresistible. Yet only the uncompromising acceptance of Christ's standards can give us the right kind of society."

#### NOTES

The meetings in London on May 10 and 11, under the auspices of "The Sword of the Spirit," and presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, gave expression to a growing common understanding among Christians of all communions of the menace today to all that Christianity stands for and of the need of a common front to overcome it. The meetings warmly endorsed the ten points in the letter of the heads of Churches last December on the Foundations of Peace.

In C.N.L. No. 52 I mentioned a project, in which a number of our members were interested, to provide a home in the country where those who have lost spiritual tone and margin through the wear and tear of work may come for rest and reinvigoration. I am glad to know that the plan has been carried to completion and that a house has been taken at Oakenrough, Hindhead, Surrey, and will be open to guests on June 1st. The home will be under the experienced direction of Miss Allshorn.

Our subscription department hope that many of our members were able to pass on to a friend the second copy of last week's News-Letter with Dr. Niebuhr's Supplement. We greatly value your co-operation in getting the News-Letter more widely known.

Yours sincerely,

*J. H. Oldham*

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